

MEMORANDUM FOR: NIO/GPE. [REDACTED]

NIO/SP &

[REDACTED] C/TF/SOVA

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The attached paper is by General John Vogt, USAF (retired). We are both members of the Defense Policy Board and this paper was prepared for that Board. The Board has not yet discussed this paper in detail, but it is clear that it will recommend a different emphasis from the R&D focus of the last page of the paper.

Henry S. Rowen
C/NIC

Attachment

Date 20 July 82

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EXPLOITING SOVIET VULNERABILITIES

Assuming the United States is able over the next decade to match the Soviet Union in the area of strategic nuclear forces, the major area of contest is apt to be in the Third World. While NATO forces continue to require substantial improvements, particularly in conventional forces, the probability is that the Soviets will not make a major military effort in the European region primarily because a threat against NATO is apt to be viewed by both East and West as the initial phase of an all-out strategic nuclear war between the two major powers. For this thesis to have validity, the United States must continue to ensure that it does not fall behind in the race with the Soviets for strategic capability.

The Soviet threat today, and for the foreseeable future, largely lies in a Soviet view of foreign policy which clearly calls for projection of Soviet power beyond its own borders by the use of unconventional force application. At the present time the Soviets are believed to have over 12,000 military personnel stationed in 24 countries around the globe, where they function as a major factor in organizing training, and at the same time, gaining influence over their client forces. The Soviets also employ surrogates, or other friendly governments, in their efforts to subvert Third World countries. Over 35,000 Cuban military personnel operate as Soviet proxies in 20 countries around the world. Another major element of Soviet power projection is their support for terrorists and other quasi-military groups who receive military equipment, economic aid, and special training. Through the use of KGB and Soviet General Staff intelligence unit operations, the Soviets develop an infrastructure within a client country which permits them to respond to political openings and to increase their penetration to the maximum extent possible.

It would appear then that the area requiring the closest US

attention in the next decade is that of countering this Soviet power projection capability within the Third World. While the US continues to work diligently to build up strength within the target countries under assault by the Soviets, it would appear that a more profitable, or certainly additionally profitable area of operation would be the exploitation by the United States and its allies of the vulnerabilities inherent within the Soviet complex of nations. In this regard, the United States could steal a page from the Soviet book of strategy. The Soviets maintain a number of special purpose forces which are trained and equipped to operate both in war and peace. They include KGB special security troops, KGB sabotage teams, Ministry of Internal Affairs troops, internal troops, and select guards airborne units under KGB control for special missions. There are also GRU troops organized to work directly with groups of forces and fleets. All of the above-mentioned forces are capable of deploying outside the Soviet Union. In wartime KGB and GRU special forces are intended to operate at some depth behind enemy lines against key political, military, and economic targets. While the United States maintains special forces for operation in wartime, the potential inherent in this type of operation has hardly been touched. Recent studies done for the Department of Defense have pointed out large areas of inherent vulnerability within the Soviet/Eastern Bloc empire. Rather than concentrate our efforts exclusively on countering Soviet incursions into the Third World area, a potentially far greater pay-off could come from a systematic exploitation of these vulnerabilities known to exist within the Soviet bloc itself. While this paper will not attempt to deal with the diplomatic, economic, political/social, and technological avenues of exploitation open to us, these areas should also be the subject of intensive examination to determine ways to optimize US leverage against the Soviet empire. An examination of the Soviet military sphere reveals basic weaknesses and strains which can be exploited in peacetime as well as wartime. While the peacetime applications go beyond the area of this current paper's

coverage, it too should be the subject of a thorough study and investigation. We will deal here only with areas and avenues of approach involving the apparent weaknesses in the Soviet military capability world-wide, but particularly in Europe, if the vulnerabilities within the Eastern bloc can be exploited immediately upon the outbreak of a NATO war.

The Soviet Union maintains a special relationship with its eastern European allies in the military sphere. The Warsaw Pact is seen as an instrument for the extension of Soviet hegemony in Europe and Asia and perhaps the Middle East, as well. The Soviets maintain pressure upon the eastern European nations to contribute more to the Warsaw Pact in terms of manpower, equipment, and budgetary allocations. The pressure being exerted by the Soviets has amounted to a heavy-handedness which, in turn, has created some tensions. There is some evidence that the cohesiveness of the Pact is eroding due to this approach. Specific examples are not hard to find. Romanian reluctance to accept a greater military burden has led to a certain intransigence. The Polish domestic instabilities with the concomitant serious economic situation has drastically limited Polish contributions to the Warsaw Pact military effort. East-German manpower limitations and certain developing animosities toward the Soviets limit an enhanced role for the GDR within the military sphere of the Warsaw Pact. The Soviets have countered these trends with a greater reliance on a Soviet command structure within the Warsaw Pact, which has a countervailing effect upon the development of command capability within the Pact national units. The Soviets continue to be committed to large Soviet military presence within the Warsaw Pact countries to ensure effective equipping, training, and doctrinal effectiveness in military operations. The Soviets perceive that Soviet presence continues to be a requirement in the face of growing nationalistic tendencies among its Warsaw Pact allies. There is also a growing perception by the Soviets that certain Warsaw Pact nations do not view Soviet world-wide objectives

as a matter of their primary interest or concern. There is also growing evidence that certain of the Pact countries would be reluctant to become involved in a war against NATO if it were initiated by the Soviets. All of this is further compounded by the fact that there has been a recent tendency for the intelligensia, religious clergy, and the working classes to unite in opposition against government policies. Soviet forces are perceived in eastern Europe as adjuncts of police domestic security forces and are accordingly resented.

In summary, there are potential exploitable vulnerabilities in the following situations within the Warsaw Pact:

- 1) Greater resistance to Soviet colonialist policies.
- 2) Growing anti-Soviet antagonisms.
- 3) Increasingly divergent Soviet and eastern European national aspirations.
- 4) Growing friction between a Soviet need for political hegemony in eastern Europe and increased eastern Europe tendencies to work toward political and economic independence and closer trade relations with the West.
- 5) The requirement for continued presence of substantial numbers of Soviet forces within Eastern Bloc countries to provide a presence and to ensure that the bloc continues to adhere to its military principles and doctrine.

It is generally accepted that the basic Soviet objective in any attack on Western Europe would be to apply maximum force designed to achieve a quick victory, while at the same time limiting damage to the Western European productive base. Any effort mounted by the West on the outbreak of hostilities to fragment or divert the main thrust of the combined forces would work to slow down or perhaps even stall the Soviet offensive. While NATO has engaged in extensive planning, training, and exercising to deal with the Soviet main force attack by conventional military operations, a much less extensive effort has been made in the area of disrupting Soviet military potential. One might well ask what would the impact of large-scale support to irregulars, guerrillas, or other organized opposition elements within the Eastern Bloc countries have upon the Soviet attack

plan. Opposition would probably include a large percentage of disaffected populace further complicating the cohesiveness and military effectiveness of initial military operations as forces are bled off to deal with uprisings behind their lines. For example, the supply of easily-transported, relatively light but highly destructive modern weapons to such forces would materially enhance their disruptive capability. If US forces could be configured to provide such support in a timely and coordinated manner, we might well see a disruptive effect on critical supply lines that would impact strongly on the achievement of initial military objectives in an attack on NATO. Of course a number of fundamental questions are immediately raised. For example, what degree of NATO political support would be forthcoming for such planning within the military structure of NATO today? What are the prospects for revised thinking within the NATO military structure leading to a successful development of this capability? What are the precise targets for such military activities, that is, what forces within what Eastern Bloc countries should be specifically targeted? More fundamentally, can the present NATO strategy which renounces offensive concepts be changed to incorporate a concept of offensive activity and planning directed against the Warsaw Bloc itself?

Assuming the United States could achieve a consensus among its NATO allies that exploiting Soviet vulnerabilities within the Eastern Bloc immediately upon the outbreak of war in NATO was a desirable thing, the United States could then undertake to substantially augment and improve its special operations forces. While US special operations forces today have great potential to deal with pre-crisis and low intensity conflict operations, they serve also as a complement to other forces in time of war. It is suggested that marked improvements in these forces now could give them far greater potential in main line conflict, such as a war within NATO, and might result in high pay-off in terms of frustrating any Soviet desire for a quick victory in Europe. At the present time all services are parti-

cipating in the development of special operations force structure. They include special forces, psychological operations units, counter-terrorist and civil affairs units of the Army, special operations forces of the Air Force, and unconventional warfare units of the Navy, such as the Naval Special Warfare groups, SEAL Teams, special boat units, and under-water demolition teams. It is suggested that an enhancement on a large scale of the current capabilities would represent a substantial improvement in dealing with the threats facing the United States and its allies today. For example, the major R&D programs of all services are currently directed toward main force nuclear and conventional systems. It is suggested that major R&D efforts in the area of developing weapons and vehicles highly suited to the special forces missions would result in large pay-off for the dollars expended.

Summary and Recommendation. There is a large area of Soviet vulnerability especially within the Eastern Bloc which could be systematically exploited upon the outbreak of war in Europe if a concerted effort is made to expand the existing modest potential currently available within the US force structure. The Soviet attack plan for Europe is a highly structured and time critical operation which could be derailed by well executed operations along critical Soviet supply lines. It is recommended that the Deputy Secretary of Defense for Policy initiate a study to examine areas of high potential pay-off starting initially with a research and development effort within each of the services, specifically directed toward the development and eventual procurement of specialized weapons and vehicles such as STEALTH transport aircraft and specialized helicopters capable of infiltrating special troops well behind Soviet lines in the event of hostilities in Europe. The R&D effort would concentrate on the exploitation of new technologies, including full exploitation of electronic warfare capability, clandestine communications, and light-weight demolition and anti-armor weapons. At the same time following acceptance of this concept at the national level, the US should initiate discussion within NATO Defense ministries and military authorities.